

Navy Said To Recruit

Assassins

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From News Dispatches

The London Sunday Times quoted a U.S. Navy psychologist yesterday as saying that the U.S. Navy has trained servicemen as political assassins and placed them in American embassies around the world.

Among the trainees were convicted murderers taken from military prisons, the story said. Navy psychologists also selected men from submarine crews and paratroop units for the special training, it said.

A Navy spokesman in Washington denied the report. He said: "The Navy categorically denies that it is or has been engaged in psychological or any other type of training of personnel as assassins. No such training has taken place."

The Sunday Times quoted Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Narut, a psychologist at the U.S. naval hospital in Naples, Italy, as the source of its report. When asked whether convicted murderers were being released for training as assassins, Narut reportedly answered, "It's happened more than once."

Sunday Times reporter Peter Watson said he obtained the details from Narut after a talk he gave last week in Oslo, Norway, at a NATO-sponsored conference of 120 psychological researchers.

The paper said Narut had not been at his home or laboratory in Naples since last week's conference and Pentagon officials said he was not due back until Monday.

In his talk, Narut said he taught "combat readiness units" to cope with the stress of killing, the newspaper said.

"When pressed afterwards as to what was meant by combat readiness units, he explained this included men for commando-type operations and for insertion into U.S. embassies under cover, ready to kill in those countries should the need arise," the newspaper said. "Dr. Narut used the words 'hit men' and 'assassin' of these men."